

THE PACIFIC
Commercial Advertiser.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18.
Oahu, and its Agricultural Prospects.

While scores of letters have been published here and abroad regarding the fertility of Maui, Kauai and Hawaii, and their peculiar adaptability to sugar culture, so little has been said of our metropolis Island, Oahu, that many living even here in Honolulu, think it fit for little else than grazing ranches and for taro. Who has not heard the remark—“Oh, cane will never grow on Oahu.” And yet there is not a better island for us in our group, not one where sugar investments are safer or more sure to yield a large return.

Last week we took a hasty ride around this island to visit the several infant plantations now under way, and to gratify our curiosity, as well as to gather information regarding them for our readers and others interested.

Passing by the two plantations in Nuuanu Valley, located within sight of the city, which we shall notice at the close of our sketch, we reached the *pali* about 10 A. M., over a good dry road, which here is seldom found in winter, and encountering a cool bracing north wind, which came rushing through the narrow gap and down the valley as if it had been engorged up an hour or two by the encircling mountains. What a scene opens here to the traveler, as he commences the descent of the precipice—a plain twenty-five miles long, intersected with ridges of low hills, and hemmed in on the *mauka* side by bold palisades, in some places two thousand feet perpendicular. As one views it, he can hardly help remembering it as the scene of some of the old Hawaiian heroes, gods and goddesses of the ancient time. ‘Twas here, in this plain, that the chase after Kamapua, half man and half hog, occurred, ending in his famous attempt to scale the remarkable gorge at Hamula. Yonder towering peak, four thousand feet above the sea, breaking below it, was the spot where Kawaleo sat and sung for her absent lover. And near here was the birth place of the lovely princess, Lahikawai, the charming story of whose exploits forms the first historical romance issued in book-form in Hawaiian.

Once down the *pali*, the traveler finds himself in Kooleo, which embraces all the windward side of this island, east of the summit ridge, and extending from Waimanalo at the south to Waimea at the north, a tract about fifty miles in length, and varying from one to five miles in width. All this district of Kooleo is exposed to frequent showers, and is intersected with numerous small streams—all which tend to make it valuable for agriculture and pasture.

Between the foot of the *pali* and the Protestant church at Kaneohe, lies the sugar estate of the Queen Dowager Kallama, where Mr. Robt. Wakeham has been engaged for some two years in breaking up the land, planting and cultivating cane. About two hundred acres are planted, in various stages of growth, only about forty acres being as yet ready to grind. Thus far, it has not had much if any irrigation, though it is probable that this will have to be resorted to. The cane is of the small white variety, and does not grow so rank and long as in some other localities where we observed it growing. From five hundred to one thousand acres are available for cane in this vicinity, but whether this extent of land can be irrigated or will raise cane to profit, is an experiment, yet to be decided.

Messrs. Cording & Wilson have entered into an arrangement with this estate, under which they erect a mill and take off the crop on shares. The mill building is of wood, large and spacious, one hundred and sixty feet in length, and, with some of the minor buildings, is completed, and the machinery erected and in working order. The mill is a large first-class machine, made by Forster & Co. of Liverpool, the rollers being fifty-four inches in length, driven by water power, which is abundant and never-failing. The chimney, train and formers are well constructed, and excepting some defect in the draft, works well. The latter is easily remedied.

The mill commenced operations about the first of February, and worked for several days. But the absence of a clarifier and some other necessities, required it to stop till these could be provided. At the time we were there, the centrifugals were being set and put into operation. These are of English make, manufactured in Nottingham, by Messrs. Manlove & Co. They are much larger, stronger and we should judge better calculated to serve the purpose intended, of drying the sugar or syrup when cooled. They are driven by water, and the arrangement for connecting the machines with the power, is one of the neatest and most simple we have ever seen. The centrifugals are checked, when it is required to stop them, by means of a brake, thus avoiding the risk of accident, which frequently occurs with the common machines. The sugar turned out from them, at the time of our visit, was dark, as might be expected from the unfinished state of the works when first started, but ere this, the mill has probably commenced operations again, and when complete will be fully capable of turning out three to four thousand pounds per day.

Prior to our visit a report was current that, after various experiments, it had been found that sugar could not be made at Kaneohe. This is incorrect, and as fine sugar will be made there as anywhere else. The mill is a strong and superior one, well put up, and with plenty of cane, it must prove a successful enterprise. There is an admirable harbor near by, and the freight is landed easily from the steamer, which lies almost alongside the bank. The carting to and from the landing, as also to and from the cane fields, is easy and nearly level. These are advantages which some other plantations do not have, and reduce very much the expense of carrying on the business.

Just beyond Kaneohe is a tract of three thousand acres, called Heia, where the Catholic church is located, which is probably well calculated for a sugar plantation; at least grows freely there. At present, it is leased to a company of natives, but it will not be many years before a mill will be required and erected on the place. It has the same advantages of, and is very similar to, the estate of the Queen Dowager.

A range of low hills, covered with green grass, and running from the mountains to the sea, bounds Heia, and separates it from the adjoining land. In a little nook, directly under the lofty palisades that are peculiar to this district, is located the Catholic Seminary of Ahuimanu, under the care of Abbé Walsh and one or two other clergymen, who have now about fifty scholars.

These are mostly half-caste boys, who are taught in English and French, but chiefly in English. The site of the Seminary is a very pleasant and romantic one, and quite secluded. Not finding the Abbe at home, we rode on, passing the farm of Mr. Stewart, beyond which, perhaps two miles, is the Kaahuna Plantation of Messrs. Montgomery, Green & McKibbin, extending from the sea back to the central mountain range. The estate comprises some two thousand acres, eight hundred acres of it being suitable for cane. About two hundred acres are already planted, of which fifty are ready to cut. These gentlemen propose erecting a mill at once, and a portion of the machinery has this week been shipped thither by the Annie *Lorraine*. The cane fields look well and appear to have an abundance of moisture. Mr. Rhodes Spencer is engaged as manager. This estate like that at Kaneohe, has a very good and smooth landing-place, and vessels can approach near the shore in still water. With good management, plenty of capital and perseverance, there is no reason why this sugar enterprise should not prove a successful one.

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